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C O N F I D E N T I A L ADDIS ABABA 003212

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C O R R E C T E D C O P Y - ADDING THREE ADDRESSEES

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E.O. 12958: DECL: 12/06/2016
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SUBJECT: SOMALI PRIME MINISTER GEDI HIGHLIGHTS FOREIGN
EXTREMIST SUPPORT FOR ICU

REF: ADDIS ABABA 3158

Classified By: P/E COUNSELOR KEVIN SULLIVAN. REASON: 1.4 (B) AND (D).

¶1. (C) SUMMARY. TFG PM Gedi reported that over 3,000 foreign Islamic militants are assisting the CIC, including fighters from Afghanistan, Pakistan, Chechnya, and Libya. Eritrea and Saudi sources have provided weapons and funding respectively to the CIC, while Somali Hawiye are increasingly backing the TFG. Collective defense of Somalia's TFG is in accordance with its national security stabilization plan, endorsed by the IGAD council of ministers and the AU PSC, Gedi added. TFG officials said potential TCCs to an IGASOM peacekeeping force include Nigeria, South Africa, Uganda and even Turkey. Citing an executive order by the CIC to assassinate 16 TFG leaders, PM Gedi affirmed that the TFG would not negotiate with terrorists, and appealed for USG assistance to interdict illegal weapons shipments to Mogadishu, as well as to provide the TFG with additional bodyguards. END SUMMARY.

COUNCIL OF ISLAMIC COURTS USING FOREIGN FIGHTERS

¶2. (C) In a December 6 meeting with Ambassador and deputy pol-econ counselor Eric Wong, Transitional Federal Government (TFG) of Somalia (TFG) Prime Minister Ali Muhammad Gedi said Somalia now faced "a choice between life and death, peace and war." Highlighting the extremist threat posed by the Council of Islamic Courts (CIC), Gedi said more than three-fourths of the CIC's strength derived from foreign fighters, including over 3,000 Islamic militants from Afghanistan, Pakistan, Sudan, Egypt, Chechnya, Comoros, and Libya, as well as Ethiopian insurgents. CIC militia leader Adan Hashi Ayro had trained in Afghanistan. The CIC had sent delegations to Islamic countries (including the UAE and Kuwait) to declare that dissident Parliamentary speaker Sharif Hassan Sheikh Adan and 30 MPs were waging jihad against the TFG. Speaker Adan had "defected" for the last 66 days, Gedi said. Military engagement of the CIC would not require a protracted guerilla war, Gedi said, as such a

conflict would be primarily against foreign fighters, rather than Somali against Somali.

¶3. (C) Somalia's PermRep to the African Union, Amb. Abdikarin Farah, noted that as Somalis were predominantly Sunni Muslims, it was foreigners who were escalating the war. Saudi sources had provided USD 3-4 million in funds to the CIC, Gedi said, delivered through flights from Nairobi, accompanied by Eritreans. Direct flights between Asmara and Mogadishu had also provided weapons and fighters; Iran was also playing a destabilizing role. Opponents were thus receiving illegal shipments of weapons, threatening the legitimate government.

¶4. (C) PM Gedi asserted that the vast majority of Hawiye supported the TFG. General Mohamed Warsame Farah, Director General of Somali Intelligence and TFG National Security Advisor, noted that 70 per cent of some 4,000 troops trained in the previous week by the TFG were Hawiye. Citing accounts from groups of dozens of escapees who had fled from ICU imprisonment to Galcaio and Baidoa, Gen. Farah said the CIC attempted to recruit fighters from captives it first tortured and then humiliated.

¶5. (C) The TFG had sought to avoid war as much as possible, Gedi said. Underscoring Somalis' right to self-defense, Gedi noted that Somalia's national security stabilization plan, endorsed by the IGAD council of ministers as well as the AU Peace and Security Council (PSC), provided for IGAD, the AU, and others to assist the TFG's security forces, and for frontline states to train and equip the TFG in emergencies. Amb. Farah observed that Somalia had formally adopted a bilateral cooperation treaty with Ethiopia in November 2005, and had similar agreements with Kenya and Djibouti. Yemen would likely assist the TFG, if the arms embargo were lifted, Gedi said. Potential troop contributing countries to IGASOM included Nigeria, South Africa, Uganda, and possibly Kenya. According to Gedi, Nigeria's President Obasanjo strongly supported lifting the

arms embargo on Somalia and had said "Tell Meles he is not alone," offering to deploy 1,800 Nigerian troops for IGASOM. If intervention were authorized by the UNSC, Turkey, as a member of the Organization of Islamic Conference (OIC), may also send troops, Amb. Farah said.

TFG WILL NOT NEGOTIATE WITH "TERRORISTS"

¶6. (C) Ethiopian deputy FM Tekeda, who met CIC representatives in Djibouti on December 1 (reftel), had concluded the CIC was not ready for dialogue, Gedi said. Gedi observed that the December 2 CIC-IGAD Secretariat communique reported on consultations chaired by IGAD Executive Secretary Dr. Attalla Hamad Bashir, a Sudanese who supported the CIC; in contrast, IGAD at the ministerial level had previously endorsed the deployment of IGASOM. The CIC would attack if a UNSCR on IGASOM deployment was adopted, Gedi added, initially facing Ethiopian and Kenya forces, and then those from other partners.

¶7. (C) PM Gedi said it was useless for the TFG to negotiate or seek compromise with CIC leaders, who sought the TFG's overthrow and the restoration of a "greater Somalia". "Sitting with Aweys is like sitting with Bin Laden," Gedi said; "we are not talking about 'Islamic courts,' we are talking about terrorists." Despite the TFG's agreement to participate in three rounds of talks with the CIC, the CIC had continually seized additional territory, and was buying time to attack. Ethiopia had taken the correct decision to back the TFG, recognizing that the national security of countries in the region was interlinked. While Ethiopia had trained 9-10,000 Somali TFG military forces, they were poorly equipped; lifting the UNSC arms embargo was a mechanism to arm trained forces to defend Somalia.

CIC LIST TARGETS TFG AND SOMALILANDERS FOR ASSASSINATION

¶18. (C) Amb. Farah provided Ambassador with a copy of an Arabic-language executive order reportedly issued by CIC leader Sheikh Hassan Dahir Aweys in Mogadishu, that calls for the assassination of 16 TFG and Somaliland leaders (including President Yusuf, PM Gedi, and Amb. Farah) and for Al-Shabab "martyrs" to "execute the operations using the most deadly suicide methods carried out by mujahidin fighters in Iraq, Afghanistan, Palestine and other countries of the world" (septel). Kenya had trained 200 VIP protection officers (now serving as police securing Baidoa), while Ethiopia had trained 50. With funding from UNDP, Kenya and Uganda had trained 1,000 police.

¶19. (C) TFG relations with Puntland authorities, who were part of the TFG, were good, PM Gedi said. Three Somaliland ministers had called on PM Gedi in Addis. Gedi cautioned, however, that international recognition of Somaliland could impair the unity of Somalia. The TFG favored the reconstruction of Somaliland, but only after the defeat of their common terrorist enemy.

¶10. (C) REQUESTS FOR USG ASSISTANCE: Noting that he had previously worked at the AU on a USAID-funded project, PM Gedi expressed appreciation for USG support and for humanitarian assistance provided through UNICEF and WFP. In contrast, he said, Italy was collaborating with CIC leader Sheikh Sharif Ahmed's Ayr sub-clan to thwart peace, just as it had leaked information to General Aideed's Habr-Gedir sub-clan to thwart UNOSOM in 1992. TFG principals made the following requests for material USG assistance:

-- USG assistance was needed to blockade Mogadishu's port and airport, Amb. Farah said. Gedi noted that the TFG had previously provided former U.S. Ambassador to Kenya Bellamy with written authorization to intercept illicit shipping in the Indian Ocean, to distinguish between commercial goods and smuggled weapons.

-- Observing that he had already survived two assassination

attempts, Gedi appealed for USG assistance to train and equip 200-300 bodyguards for himself and President Yusuf. Gen. Farah said additional funds were needed to provide Ethiopian trainers in Baidoa with facilities.
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